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Note by the Secretariat on the regional implementation meetings for the twelfth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development

Summary

The present document briefly discusses the implementation meetings held by the five regional commissions in order to contribute to the work of the Commission on Sustainable Development, in response to the invitation of the Commission at its eleventh session. The five addenda to the present document report on the outcome of those meetings in detail.

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I. Introduction

1. At its eleventh session, in 2003, the Commission on Sustainable Development, invited the regional commissions, in collaboration with the secretariat of the Commission, to consider organizing regional implementation meetings in order to contribute to the work of the Commission, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and in collaboration with other regional and subregional organizations and bodies, as appropriate, as well as the regional offices of funds, programmes and international finance and trade institutions and other organizations and bodies of the United Nations system. Such meetings were, preferably, to take place before the review session of the Commission on Sustainable Development and were to:

(a) Contribute to advancing the implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation;

(b) Focus on the thematic cluster of issues to be addressed in the ongoing implementation cycle;

(c) Provide input to the Secretary-General's reports and the sessions of the Commission on Sustainable Development. Those inputs may include identification of obstacles and constraints, new challenges and opportunities related to the implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, and sharing of lessons learned and best practices;

(d) Provide for contributions from major groups, taking into account paragraphs 139 (g) and 149 (c) and (d) of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation.[1]

2. Following the eleventh session, the Division for Sustainable Development of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs invited the sustainable development focal points from the five regional commissions to jointly plan ways and means of organizing regional implementation meetings in each region in preparation for the twelfth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development. As a result the Economic Commission for Africa, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific and the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia identified relevant forums at which the review of the regional implementation of commitments on the themes of the twelfth session could be organized, while the Economic Commission for Europe decided to organize a regional implementation meeting specifically for that purpose. The meetings are briefly described below.

II. Africa

3. The African Regional Implementation Meeting was held in Addis Ababa from 8 to 12 December 2003, within the context of the Pan-African Conference on Implementation and Partnership on Water. An overall review of the progress in implementation in the CSD-12 thematic areas of water, sanitation and human settlements in Africa was undertaken, including identification of constraints, opportunities and challenges facing the region in these areas.

4. The results of the African Regional Implementation Meeting are contained in addendum 1 to the present note.

III. Asia and the Pacific

5. The Regional Implementation Meeting for Asia and the Pacific, held in Bangkok on 27 and 28 October 2003 (in association with a regional workshop on national sustainable development strategies for Asia and the Pacific), identified major achievements and challenges faced in implementation, as well as lessons learned in the process, of initiatives on water, sanitation and human settlements. It also examined existing partnerships in these areas in the region.

6. The results of the Regional Implementation Meeting for Asia and the Pacific are contained in addendum 2 to the present note.

IV. Economic Commission for Europe region

7. The Regional Implementation Forum on Sustainable Development within the Economic Commission for Europe region, held in Geneva on 15 and 16 January 2004, assessed the situation with respect to water, sanitation, human settlements and related cross-sectoral issues in the region. A number of examples of good practices were identified.

8. The Chair's summary of the Regional Implementation Forum, is contained in addendum 3 to the present note. A brief report of the Forum, with an annex containing the examples of good practices, was issued as a document of the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE/AC.25/2004/2).

V. Latin America and the Caribbean

9. Three meetings were held in the Latin America and the Caribbean region: the Regional Forum of Ministers of Housing and Urban Development (La Paz, 5-7 November 2003); an international seminar on the analysis of the outcomes of the Johannesburg Summit (Santiago, 17-18 November 2003); and the Fourteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean (Panama, 20-25 November 2003).

10. At the Regional Forum of Ministers of Housing and Urban Development, the La Paz Declaration was adopted and the achievements, challenges and lessons learned in the region in the area of human settlements, taking into account the cross-cutting issues of water and sanitation, identified.

11. The international seminar on the analysis of the outcomes of the Johannesburg Summit took stock of the Johannesburg outcomes in terms of their implications for the region. Regional features and challenges were identified as points for discussion at the twelfth session of the Commission.

12. At the Fourteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean, Ministers and heads of delegations adopted the Panama Declaration and the Regional Plan of Action 2004-2005, which established

a strategy and identified the specific actions to be undertaken in the coming biennium for the implementation of the Latin American and Caribbean initiative.

13. The results of the three meetings are contained in addendum 4 to the present note.

VI. West Asia

14. The fourth session of the Joint Committee on Environment and Development in the Arab World was held in Cairo from 19 to 21 October 2003.

15. In the context of the twelfth session of the Commission, the Joint Committee focused on the themes of water, sanitation and human settlements as well as governance for sustainable development, and adopted a number of resolutions aimed at the implementation of the Johannesburg Programme of Action that were subsequently submitted to the Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for the Environment at its meeting in December 2003.

16. Decisions and resolutions of the session related to follow-up to the World Summit on Sustainable Development and the twelfth session of the Commission are contained in addendum 5 to the present note.

Notes

[1] *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, Supplement No. 9* (E/2003/29), chap. I.A., draft resolution I.